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| 2002-2003 SAMPLE MEDIA RELEASE for FREE and REDUCED-PRICE MEALS in the NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH and SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAMS | On (insert date) _____ this public release was/will be sent to (enter names of news media outlets and major employers contemplating layoffs): _____ _____ |
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(Enter district or agency name) today announced its policy for providing free and reduced-price meals for children served under the (insert National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program). Each school and/or the central office has a copy of the policy, which may be reviewed by any interested party.

The household size and income criteria identified below will be used to determine eligibility for free, reduced-price, or full-price meal benefits. Children from households whose income is at or below the levels shown are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Children who receive Food Stamp, California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payments (KinGAP), or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) benefits are automatically eligible regardless of the income of the household in which they reside. Eligibility for a foster child is based on a separate application and solely on the child's income.

| FREE MEAL ELIGIBILITY SCALE | | | | REDUCED-PRICE MEAL ELIGIBILITY SCALE | | |
|--|------------|----------|---------|---|----------|----------|
| Lunch, Breakfast, Milk | | | | Lunch, Breakfast | | |
| HOUSEHOLD SIZE | YEAR | MONTH | WEEK | YEAR | MONTH | WEEK |
| 1 | \$11,518 | \$ 960 | \$ 222 | \$16,391 | \$ 1,366 | \$ 316 |
| 2 | \$15,522 | \$ 1,294 | \$ 299 | \$22,089 | \$ 1,841 | \$ 425 |
| 3 | \$19,526 | \$ 1,628 | \$ 376 | \$27,787 | \$ 2,316 | \$ 535 |
| 4 | \$23,530 | \$ 1,961 | \$ 453 | \$33,485 | \$ 2,791 | \$ 644 |
| 5 | \$27,534 | \$ 2,295 | \$ 530 | \$39,183 | \$ 3,266 | \$ 754 |
| 6 | \$31,538 | \$ 2,629 | \$ 607 | \$44,881 | \$ 3,741 | \$ 864 |
| 7 | \$35,542 | \$ 2,962 | \$ 684 | \$50,579 | \$ 4,215 | \$ 973 |
| 8 | \$39,546 | \$ 3,296 | \$ 761 | \$56,277 | \$ 4,690 | \$ 1,083 |
| For each additional family member, add: | | | | | | |
| | + \$ 4,004 | + \$ 334 | + \$ 77 | + \$ 5,698 | + \$ 475 | + \$ 110 |

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Sample Media Release for Free and Reduced-Price Meals

(continued)

Application forms are being distributed to all households with a letter informing them of the availability of free and reduced-price meals for their children. Applications are also available at the principal's office in each school. To apply for free or reduced-price meals, households must complete an application and return it to the school. Applications may be submitted at any time during the school year. The information households provide on the application will be used to determine meal eligibility and may be verified at any time during the school year by school or program officials.

Requirements for school officials to determine eligibility for free and reduced-price benefits are as follows: For households receiving Food Stamp, CalWORKs, KinGAP, or FDPIR benefits – applications need only include the enrolled child(ren)'s name, Food Stamp, CalWORKs, KinGAP, or FDPIR case number, and the signature of an adult household member. For households who do not list a Food Stamp, CalWORKs, KinGAP, or FDPIR case number, the application must include the names of all household members, the amount and source of the income received by each household member, and the signature and corresponding social security number of an adult household member; if the household member who signs the application does not have a social security number, the household member must indicate that a social security number is not available.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price meal policy, the determining official(s), as designated by the sponsor/agency, shall review applications and determine eligibility. Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the eligibility ruling may discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. Parents may also make a formal request for an appeal hearing of the decision, and may do so orally or in writing with the sponsor/agency's hearing official. Parents or guardians should contact their child(ren)'s school(s) for specific information regarding the name of the determining official and/or hearing official for a specific school, agency, or district.

Households that list a Food Stamp, CalWORKs, KinGAP, or FDPIR case number must report when the household no longer receives these benefits. Households that are approved for benefits based on income must report increases in household income of over \$50 per month or \$600 per year and decreases in household size. Also, if a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the levels shown above.

Sponsors/Agencies that use direct certification should add the following paragraph to their public release:

Households that receive Food Stamp, CalWORKs, KinGAP, or FDPIR benefits may not have to complete an *Application for Free or Reduced-Price Meals or Free Milk*. School officials will determine eligibility for free meals based on documentation obtained directly from the Food Stamp, CalWORKs, KinGAP, or FDPIR office that a child is a member of a household currently receiving Food Stamp or FDPIR benefits or an assistance unit receiving CalWORKs or KinGAP benefits. School officials will notify households of their eligibility, but those who do not want their child(ren) to receive free meals must contact the school. Food Stamp, CalWORKs, KinGAP, and FDPIR households should complete an application if they are not notified of their eligibility by (insert date)_____.